

## **DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING**

**Monday, June 21, 2010 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Mayor's Reception Room  
Room 405, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor City Hall**

**Present:** Donna Bluebird, Toni Dickenson, Ron Haglund, Rickey DeFoe, Joy Dorscher, Donna Ennis

Excused Absence: Ron Boshey

Unexcused Absence: Donovan Strong, Renee Van Nett; Beatrice Kitto has verbally resigned

### **CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:13. There is one change to the agenda, in that Mark Ruben would like to reschedule for next month as he is unable to be here this evening.

**Motion by Donna Bluebird, seconded by Toni Dickenson, to approve the agenda with the noted change. The motion was unanimously approved.**

DAIC introductions, Community introductions, One community member, Warner Wirta requested that the DAIC get to know the latest appointee to the Spirit Mountain Authority Board, Veronica Nelson. Joy Dorscher agreed to contact Veronica Nelson to ask her to come to the DAIC meeting to discuss issues of the Spirit Mountain development.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 17, 2010 MEETING:**

**Motion by Ron Haglund, seconded by Toni Dickenson, to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2010 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

Nothing this evening

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **AICHO's Gimaajii (YWCA Housing/Indian Center) Report**

Maria Danz from AICHO was present to give an update on the project. They require approval from the National Parks Service for rehabilitation plans. The documentation was submitted June 2<sup>nd</sup> but it has not yet been approved.

Last week there was a sustainable community summit. They gave tours and gave an overview and will meet with someone from Ho Chunk to give a tour of the project. There is no plan to approach them for funds, but they are interested in seeing the

project as they may have a similar project in mind. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency gave approval for the final amount after having been sent through the board. Construction is planned to start date to August 31. It was previously to begin June, but the delay is due to the process required to get everything in order to proceed and is not completely unexpected for a project of this size/nature.

Employment when available will be done primarily through subcontractors and will require union status. AICHO would like to work through a tribal employment office when the time is closer, perhaps the Red Lake Urban Office.

There is no formal process yet for taking names for housing opportunities; however, AICHO is taking names of those interested and information will be sent out when the time is closer. The number to be put on the list to receive the information is 218-722-7225

**Juvenile Justice Reform Update** – Melanie Ford brought James Payne, Senior Consultant with the Annie E Casey Foundation, and Raquel Mariscal, Senior Consultant for the Juvenile Detention alternatives Initiative (JDAI). JDAI is a program similar to Annie E Casey foundation.

In order for things to be more equitable with students from minority populations, eight core strategies for the education of racial and ethnic disparities. Another area that is under-attended is the disproportionality of Native American youth in the juvenile justice system in other parts of the country. This has been addressed through peer-to-peer work and work with the state and tribal courts. In other areas, more traditional community interactions have been used to reclaim their history with some success (such as sweats). Work with community organizations has improved this. They would like to see this addressed in a more intentional way on a national level.

In Duluth the process has been slow but deliberate, with an honest confrontation of issues supported with data. There is a great intentionality and progress here. The risk assessment is being developed and will be used to inform the process. It has been an 18 month process and is moving forward.

Probation is the largest single admission process and this violation is more status behavior. The individual makes a mistake and they go from being free to being confined. Especially for these kinds of situations it is important to look closely at that process for how this happens. We here will come to the point where we have the right kids in detention and it takes time to work that out for ourselves and in the process have developed good working relationships with all parties involved.

There are some very unique differences between what was observed in Santa Cruz County and what we are seeing here. For example, there are no women in Santa Cruz and we have a relatively large Native American female incarcerated population (half of

the incarcerated women are Indian). Although changes are evident in Santa Cruz, the disparities are widening and that is concerning.

It is important to stay ahead of the curve; for example, looking at remedial education in order to assist in getting into college, or using home monitoring, which would be much less expensive than incarceration; because although the numbers are down but the disparities, the gap has actually increased.

It is important that those who are incarcerated need to be there not for other services such as mental health. It cannot be a dumping ground for those who are having problems in school or who need other services. This should be retained for those who need to be incarcerated but not the others; find the best fit for the individual situation.

In Santa Cruz there is an extraordinary probation process. They work with the family, school, sort of a 360 degree wrap around process in order to show the child that everyone supports you and you are able to move forward in a meaningful way. This is using strength based community practices rather than putting all the onus on the child who does not have the ability to deal with these kinds of issues. It allows the child to meet success as much as they are able and it shifts the power and develops true community partner organization. They provide the partners with the money to do the jobs that they are really good at rather than asking the probation system to do it alone. These community organizations are better equipped to work with some of these situations. The child needs to have an assessment done in order to identify leverage and intervention points before they get labeled. It is good for the child, but it is much more cost effective as well. Equally as important, the evaluations must also be culturally competent.

By bringing judges into the process, as developers of these processes, as committee members, they can share their data and expertise. The judges in this county are open and want to work with this. That is a huge advantage. For example, Judge Flourke is very involved in these discussions. We have a momentum going.

Dickenson asked whether these are affordable for everyone. If they go to the shelter rather than the detention center, parents have to pay.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Casey Foundation: JDAI** - see previous agenda item

**Feast and Forum Planning** – Trepanier Hall was brought up as a possibility for the community feast and forum because of its central location, appropriate size and less echo. Donna Ennis will check into the availability of the site. Pot luck seemed to work the best although there was talk of supplementing this with Fourth Street Market or the Native Chef. No decision was made. Thursday August, 19<sup>th</sup> was discussed as a possible date but no decision was made. Further discussion will take place at next

month's meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Information was shared with the Commission about communications that had been received from various parties:

Bob Grytdahl of the Human Rights Office asked Co-Chair Ennis if she (or others) would be interested in participating in discussions about a bill before the Minnesota House of Representatives HF 3830 introduced May 6, 2010 by Representative Drazkowski, et. al., with a variety of initiatives regarding illegal immigrating in the state of Minnesota.

Co-Chair Defoe received a letter dated May 24, 2010 from Duluth Workforce Development, asking if we had people who would be interested in participating as a guest mentor.

Follow up to editorial blog from Robin Washington. The paper is returning to a comments section with more stringent oversight. The Fargo Forum has been testing this new system. The writer must register, create facebook style demographics page, then they can state their likes or dislikes with regard to a specific topic. If the paper gets a certain number of "dislikes" with regard to a topic then the comment will be brought down. They have decided against the community moderator model discussed at the previous meeting.

Melanie Ford requested DAIC support for a grant. Donna Bluebird was not present at the time of the vote, although she agreed prior to leaving that she would support this racial justice improvement project. With her vote, the measure would have passed unanimously; however, there was concern that we may not be able to vote asynchronously. Donna Ennis will check with Keith Hamre about the rules of the Commission.

**NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION:**

July 19 is the next meeting

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.